

## Abstract

**RESEARCH SUBJECT:** The Effectiveness of Concept Mapping as an Educational Tool to Enhance Critical Thinking Skills in Undergraduate Nursing Students

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Concept mapping is an educational tool used to diagram relationships among concepts. This idea of concept mapping used in nursing educational settings, can help foster critical thinking skills by showing students connections between ideas or concepts they are currently studying. The purpose of this study is to determine if concept mapping is an effective educational tool to enhance critical thinking skills in undergraduate nursing students. This is a replication of the study completed by Wheeler and Collins (2003). The framework is Ausubel's assimilation theory (Ausubel, 1968). A convenience sample (n=76) will be randomly assigned to experimental (n=44) and control (n=32) groups. The experimental group will be taught concept mapping as a means of organizing patient data in preparation of clinicals. The control group will be taught to organize patient data with traditional nursing care plans. Critical thinking skills will be measured with the California Critical Thinking Skills Test, which yields six scores: an overall score and five subscales (analysis, evaluation, inference, deductive reasoning, and inductive reasoning).